



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June 15, 2012

Dear Select County and District Superintendents:

FEDERAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT ARTS EDUCATION

This letter is intended to clarify the use of federal funding to support arts education.

Under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), local educational agencies (LEAs) have the flexibility within certain programs to use federal funds to support the arts. However, Title I, Part A funds may not be used to fund programs whose primary objective is arts education. These funds may be used only in limited circumstances to fund aspects of arts education if the strategies have been demonstrated to improve student academic achievement in English-language arts (ELA) and/or mathematics. In order to use Title I, Part A funds, a Title I school's School Site Council (SSC) must develop, review, update, and approve the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), which then must be approved by the local governing board. Any LEA seeking to use funds for this purpose must comply with the requirements governing the development and approval of the SPSA.

Title I funding might be appropriately used to support arts education as a strategy to improve student achievement in ELA and mathematics at a Title I school if, after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the school has identified research-based strategies or programs incorporating arts instruction to improve the academic achievement in ELA and mathematics for participating students. Implementation of the selected strategy or program should include student achievement objectives that are research-based, specific, measurable, attainable, and focused on increasing the academic achievement for all participating students in the school. At the end of each year, implementation of the strategy or program must be evaluated for effectiveness in terms of its impact on student achievement.

Other federal programs, including Title II, Part A can be used more broadly to support arts education in the context of professional development, strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations, model program development, and the dissemination of best practices. Because of the complexity and varying rules of different federal programs, LEAs are encouraged to refer to their legal counsel regarding the specific uses of ESEA funds when designing programs.

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As LEAs struggle to prioritize expenditures with the scarce federal, state, and local resources currently available, it is prudent to be clear regarding the opportunities and legal parameters associated with using federal funding to support arts education.

Superintendent Torlakson believes strongly that children should receive a holistic education that includes activities that reinforce academics, develop skills, capture student interest, and support student engagement. Arts education can play an important role in this regard. We hope this letter will assist you in making important decisions about the use of federal dollars to support arts education.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Christine Swenson, Director, Improvement and Accountability Division, by phone at 916-319-0926 or by e-mail at cswenson@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Deborah V.H. Sigman, Deputy Superintendent
District, School, and Innovation Branch

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